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Exercise Conduct: Promoting Participant Safety during a Full-Scale Exercise

SUMMARY

Exercise planners should promote participant safety during a full-scale exercise (FSE) by designating an exercise safety officer and ensuring that beverages, shade, and on-site medical care are available.

DESCRIPTION

On June 7, 2005, Volusia County, Florida hosted a FSE simulating a man portable air defense systems (MANPADS) attack on a commercial airliner departing from Daytona Beach International Airport. The aim was to improve cooperation between agencies likely to take part in an ocean mass casualty incident. Over 300 people were involved, 140 of which were designated as victims or other exercise injects and positioned on a quarter-mile portion of Daytona Beach.

Exercise planners recognized that FSE participants might be exposed to extreme temperatures for long periods due to the exercise's beach location, 1:00 pm start time, and potential duration. This prompted concerns about dehydration and/or sunburn. Volusia County Emergency Management (VCEM) took a number of pre-exercise actions to address these concerns, including:

- **Safety officer:** VCEM designated an exercise safety officer who worked closely with the incident safety officer. The exercise safety officer's primary job was to monitor the participants' well-being. He also had the authority to stop the exercise in the event of a safety problem.
- **Beverages:** VCEM solicited the help of the American Red Cross, Coast to Coast Chapter, to provide bottled water and sports drinks throughout the FSE. VCEM reimbursed the Red Cross \$300 for its contribution.
- **Shaded areas:** VCEM made sure that shaded areas were available at both the participant staging area and the FSE location.
- **Medical care:** VCEM contracted Emergency Medical Foundation, Inc., also known as EVAC Ambulance, to provide medical care at the FSE site. Ambulances were ready for the treatment and transport of injured or ill participants.

In addition, VCEM told participants that if they had a safety problem, they should report to individuals wearing blue/black hats and lime green vests.

Exercise planners should promote safety during a FSE by designating an exercise safety officer and ensuring that beverages, shade, and on-site medical care are available for participants. Volunteer or non-profit organizations, such as the American Red Cross and EVAC Ambulance, can help in this endeavor.

CITATION

- Mauney, James. Deputy Fire Chief, Volusia County Emergency Management. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*. July 13, 2005.

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